GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:300
ANSWERED ON:09.12.2009
HAJ PILGRIMAGE 2009
Kataria Shri Lal Chand

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the existing laws governing grant of permission to Indians going on Haj pilgrimage;

(b) whether the applications received for Haj Pilgrimage exceeded the prescribed quota during 2009;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government proposes to increase the quota of Haj pilgrimage during 2010; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. M. KRISHNA)

(a) In accordance with the Haj Agreement signed with the Government of Saudi Arabia, the Haj quota is allotted between the Haj Committee of India (HCOI) and the Private Tour Operators (PTOs). Subsequently, HCOI allocates this quota among various States on the basis of their percentage of Muslim population as per 2001 census. HCOI then invites applications from the intending pilgrims; thereafter, the selection is made on a random basis through computerized qurrah (lots). Quota can be availed under this category once in five years.

PTOs are registered by the Ministry of External Affairs to ensure transparency and competitiveness. Quota is allotted to them as per prescribed criteria and policy which is widely publicized through the media and websites.

(b) Yes, sir.

(c) The total Haj quota allotted by Saudi Government for Haj - 2009 was 1,67,991, out of which 1,20,586 was for the pilgrims travelling through Haj Committee of India and remaining 47,405 was distributed among Private Tour Operators.

Haj Committee of India received 3,57,338 applications out of which 1,20,127 pilgrims proceeded through Haj Committee of India.

Since the process for Haj-2009 is still underway, the actual number of pilgrims who performed Haj during this year through Private Tour Operators cannot be provided.

(d) & (e) Quota for the next year will be decided on the basis of the Haj Agreement to be signed between the Indian & Saudi Governments. Therefore, Haj quota for 2010 would depend on the decision of the Saudi Government. However, Government makes all efforts to secure additional quota so that the aspirations of more and more Muslims to perform Haj could be fulfilled.